

VZCZCXRO1684
RR RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK
DE RUEHGB #1337/01 1210835
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 300835Z APR 08
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 7102
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 001337

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/29/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: COR SPEAKER MAHMOUD MASHADANI: NO IRAQI SHOULD BE
A CARD IN ANYONE'S HAND

Classified By: Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: On April 26, Council of Representatives (CoR) Speaker Mashadani told the Ambassador that diplomatic representation from Saudi Arabia is needed to bolster Arab relations with Iraq and counteract Iran's growing influence. Regarding the Sadrists, Mashadani shared with the Ambassador that a parliamentary delegation, to include Sadrists, will meet soon with the Executive Council to work towards a resolution of the current conflict. He also conveyed that PM Maliki and the Tawafuq bloc are making progress in negotiating Tawafuq's return and specific ministerial positions. Regarding the elections law, Mashadani agreed that the version approved by the Council of Ministers (CoM) would be the working draft. As for the hydrocarbons law, Mashadani said he asked the Cabinet to give him a copy of its working draft, and indicated he might not share it with Oil and Gas Committee Chair Ali Belu (KAL), who he accused of taking orders from KRG leaders Massoud and Nechirvan Barzani. End summary.

IRAQ'S NEIGHBORS: SAUDI PRESENCE WANTED

¶2. (C) The Ambassador and Mashadani discussed Kuwait's Neighbor's Conference (April 20-21) and the importance of strengthening Saudi-Iraqi relations. Mashadani told the Ambassador Iraq needs Saudi Arabia's presence to counteract Iran's influence. The Ambassador encouraged Mashadani and other Iraqis to establish contacts with the Saudis. In response, Mashadani mentioned that one of his friends is part of the "Saudi Shura," a consultative council, and would be helpful. Mashadani declared: "Saudi should have a good strong relationship with us." He added that the Saudis should maintain good relations with Tawafuq bloc leader Adnan Duleimi. Mashadani observed unhappily that the European Union has a stronger presence in Iraq than other Arab countries. "Arabs should not be absent from Iraq," he lamented.

THE SADRISTS AND IRAN: A BOMB READY TO EXPLODE

¶3. (C) Mashadani told the Ambassador the Sadrists do not have a clear agenda and complained that they had "burned down my home," referring to one of his houses outside of the International Zone. He called the Sadrist movement a "bomb ready to explode," particularly if the "siege" in Sadr City continues. Mashadani then expressed ire regarding the Sadrist Trend's ties with Iran and militia groups such as Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM). "No Iraqi should be a card in anyone's hands," he stressed. Instead, all Iraqis should stand against extremists and JAM. Mashadani then told the Ambassador a delegation from the CoR of various bloc members, to include Sadrists, will meet with the Executive Council to negotiate a peaceful solution to the current conflict.

14. (C) Regarding Tawafuq's return to the GOI, Mashadani shared with the Ambassador that there is progress, but conflict remains in negotiating the names of Tawafuq's ministers to the cabinet. He also mentioned there is dissension within Tawafuq regarding these decisions. "The GOI is weak," he said, stressing the need for a united government. He called for PM Maliki to sack his weak ministers, highlighting the Minister of Defense Abdul Qadir as an example, and reshuffle the cabinet. He predicted the Sadrist bloc, Fadila, and Hewan would not rejoin the GOI and would instead leave it "splintered." Mashadani, his mind evidently wandering, then made some rambling comments about the CoR needing to prepare a "shadow government" in the event the current government coalition collapses.

ELECTIONS AND HYDROCARBONS LEGISLATION

15. (C) Mashadani and the Ambassador discussed the status of the elections law in the CoR and its importance to Iraq's long-term progress. When asked about the various drafts floating about, Mashadani replied that he is focused on a united agenda, not a divided one. He said the CoR would wait for the CoM version (which was subsequently delivered to the CoR on April 28). He confirmed that the CoM version would become the CoR's working draft. "I always look for a baseline from the executive branch," he stressed.

16. (C) Regarding hydrocarbons legislation, Mashadani said he asked the GOI to send him the February 2007 draft, but claimed the GOI had not yet sent it to him. He also added he doesn't want to "leave it in the hands" of the CoR's Oil and

BAGHDAD 00001337 002 OF 002

Gas Committee Chair Ali Belu (KAL), who he blamed for delaying the legislation. "He's taking orders from the North," Mashadani claimed, referring to the Barzanis. In response, the Ambassador shared with Mashadani that he visited both KRG PM Nechirvan and President Massoud Barzani in Irbil April 25-26, and that they may visit Baghdad soon for a new round of talks on the hydrocarbons legislation.

BUTENIS